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IWU Offering New Internship Opportunities in Asia

Jan. 12, 2015

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— More than a dozen Illinois Wesleyan University students will intern in Asia this summer or next academic year, thanks to a \$100,000 grant from the Freeman Foundation.

Approximately 14 IWU Asia Internship Program awards are available for current sophomores or juniors of any major who are U.S. citizens. Funding support for internships in Hong Kong, the Philippines and other locations in Asia includes airfare, housing and living allowance. The deadline for application is Feb. 2.

“This is a remarkable opportunity for Illinois Wesleyan students to build on the University’s strengths in experiential learning and our commitment to developing global citizens,” said Jonathan Green, provost and dean of the faculty. “Workplace and service learning environments provide students with invaluable insights about new cultures in a way that an international classroom cannot. By working with locals on shared projects, these students will develop a deep appreciation and understanding of the people in the communities they serve. We are grateful that the Freeman Foundation has recognized the benefits this work will provide for our students and our partners in Asia.”

Students who will study next academic year at Lingnan University in Hong Kong may apply for funding support. If funded, students must take as one of their courses the service learning class that involves working with social service agencies in Hong Kong.

Internship opportunities are also available at several sites in the Philippines. Illinois Wesleyan science students can be placed at several research sections of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), headquartered in Los Baños, in the province of Laguna.

“At IRRI, students will work alongside international and local scientists,” said Professor of Sociology Teddy O. Amoloza, who led efforts to secure the grant and was a visiting scholar at the rice institute in 1997. “IRRI has an active internship program.”

Chemistry students may intern at IRRI’s Grain Quality and Nutrition Center, for example, while biology students may be placed at the Plant Breeding, Genetics and Biotechnology Division. Biology and environmental studies students have opportunities in the Crop and Environmental Sciences Division as well. Internship opportunities for chemistry, biology and environmental studies students are available at the C4 Rice Center, IRRI’s most ambitious project, which seeks to convert rice into a crop using C4 (named for four carbons) photosynthesis by manipulating its own genes. Students may also intern in other IRRI departments (Finance, Donor Relations, Human Resource Services), among others.

Other internship opportunities in the Philippines include the Student Affairs Office at St. Scholastica’s College in Manila or Bulacan’s Gawad Kalinga Enchanted Farm, a social business incubator for countryside development.

“Gawad Kalinga is a nationwide NGO in the Philippines,” Amoloza explained. “I visited their School for Experiential and Entrepreneurial Development last October. The array of experiences they provide their interns is very, very impressive.”

Amoloza stressed that the IWU Asia Internship Program is open to all sophomores and juniors who are U.S. citizens regardless of major. The Freeman Foundation grant will also support internships in other parts of southeast and east Asia if IWU faculty members will take the lead in arranging for placements. Amoloza said such arrangements are currently underway for placements in Japan and through Hang Seng Management College in Hong Kong.

“To function effectively in this global society where Asia plays a prominent role, it is important, almost imperative, for our students not only to know about Asia but to experience Asia as well,” said Amoloza. “This internship experience, whereby they will be able to work alongside Asians, and in some cases other nationalities as well, will give them that opportunity.”

More information about the program is available from Amoloza at tamoloza@iwu.edu.